The terms of reference of the Group are as under:

(i) whether it would be TRIPs (Agreement on Trade Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights) compatible to limit the grant of patent for pharmaceutical substance to new chemical entity or to new medical entity involving one or more inventive steps; and

(ii) whether it would be TRIPs compatible to exclude micro-organisms from patenting

The Group held its first meeting on 29th April, 2005. The report of the Group is awaited.

Meeting of NMCC

4342. SHRIMATI VANGA GEETHA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the first meeting of the newly constituted National manufacturing Competitiveness Council has taken place recently;

(b) the details of the discussions that tookplace in the meeting; and

(c) the decision taken?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (c) The first meeting of the National manufacturing Competitiveness Council (NMCC) was held on 6.1.2005 and taken a decision to form 11 Working Groups to suggest sector specific initiatives in order to make the Indian industry globally competitive. 9 Working Groups had already held detailed discussions with various stakeholders. The NMCC is in the process of formulating the strategy for intervention.

Gom on SEZs

4343. SHRI GIREESH KUMAR SANGHI:
DR. T. SUBBARAMI REDDY:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether Grop of Ministers on Central Legislation for Special Economic Zones under Chairmanship of Defence Minister has finalized its position, clearing path for a unified and stable export incentive and fiscal policy regime for units operating in these zones; and

(b) if so, what are the main recommendations made by this Group of Ministers and whether any legislation is being considered for giving a final touch on special zones formation?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) and (b) On the basis of recommendations of the Group of Ministers headed by Defence Minister, a proposal for introduction of a Special Economic Zone Bill in the Parliament is under consideration of the Cabinet.

Sale of tea from small producers through auctions

4344. SH. SK. KHABIR UDDIN AHMED: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) what actions Government propose to take to ensure sale of tea from small producers through auctions;

(b) whether Government are aware of some syndicates considering the bids in the auction houses and retail prices of tea in the domestic market; and

(c) if so, how Government ensures remunerative prices for tea in the auction houses?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI E.V.K.S. ELANGOVAN): (a) Steps taken to encourage tea producers of India, particularly the small tea producers, to sell their tea through public tea auctions include introduction of electronic auctions, encouraging opening of new auction centers and issue of direction on auction rules aiming at reduction in transaction time and cost, competition in auction system, enhancing the speed of auction to handle maximum volume etc.

(b) and (c) The prices of tea at the auctions are determined by the demand and supply position. The retail prices of tea in the domestic